

**WISCONSIN GROUNDWATER COORDINATING COUNCIL
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES – FEBRUARY 25, 2005
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN AQUATIC SCIENCES CENTER**

Members Present: Todd Ambs (DNR), Fran Garb (UW-System), Jamie Robertson (WGNHS), Dan Scudder (DOT), Henry Anderson (DHFS), Eric Scott for Berni Mattsson (Commerce), and Bruce Rheineck for Kathy Pielsticker (DATCP)

Others Present: Tim Asplund and Mike Lemcke (DNR), Jim Hurley and Anders Andren (UW Aquatic Sciences Center), Randy Hunt and Chuck Dunning (USGS), Randy Zogbaum (DATCP), Nancy Quirk (WWA), Ed Morse (WRWA), and Jeff Wilcox (UW Madison)

The meeting began at 12:00 PM.

1. **General business** – Introductions were made. Meeting minutes from November 12th were approved as distributed with the meeting packet. The GCC also affirmed Resolutions of Appreciation for two long-time Subcommittee members who retired this spring - Jim Peterson, Director of the UW Environmental Resources Center and Steve Born, professor of Urban and Regional Planning at UW Madison.
2. **Groundwater Advisory Committee (GAC)** - Todd Ambs reported that the first meeting of the Groundwater Advisory Committee had been scheduled for April 1st. The GAC was created by 2003 Wisconsin Act 310 to recommend management strategies for Groundwater Management Areas created by the legislation and to fill in and further define some of its concepts. As of the GCC meeting, 11 of 14 members of the GAC had been appointed. In addition, two science/planning work groups had been formed to help the GAC evaluate site specific impacts of high capacity wells and deal with regional planning and water management concepts. The GCC will have a formal link to the GAC through Todd Ambs, who serves as a member of both groups, as well as various subcommittee members who have been asked to serve on the science/planning work groups for the GAC. More information on the GAC: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/gac/index.htm>.
3. **Subcommittee restructuring** - Tim Asplund provided an update on the GCC Subcommittee restructuring that was discussed at the November meeting. As approved by the GCC, the Planning & Mapping Subcommittee will no longer exist, with its functions and members combined with the Local Government and Monitoring & Data Management Subcommittees. At the November meeting, the GCC had also discussed creating separate Monitoring and Information Technology Subcommittees. In consultation with the chair of the MDMS, the Subcommittee will remain together, but the tasks will be divided between two work groups focused on monitoring and data management/mapping topics. Tim handed out a table showing the new Subcommittee structure, functions, and membership based upon these changes. The new Subcommittee titles are Education, Research, Monitoring & Data Management (divided into Monitoring and Data Work Groups), and Local Government & Planning.
4. **Education Subcommittee report** - Randy Zogbaum provided a brief overview of the January Education Subcommittee meeting, noting the following 2 items:
 - The *Groundwater Information Network* is now in place, with 7 different groups on the distribution list. The idea of this network is to make connections between the GCC and non-state affiliated groups engaged in groundwater educational activities. This will be accomplished through creating a point of contact through the Education Subcommittee and sharing of agendas and minutes. This idea was first suggested at the Groundwater Summit held in 2001.
 - The Subcommittee continues to discuss ways to improve communication and educational

messages about pesticides and nitrate in well water. Randy noted that one forum that may be overlooked for communicating messages is in the context of public hearings on various state regulatory activities.

Randy also noted that the Education Subcommittee would miss Jim Peterson's presence and leadership. Jim had been a faithful member of the Subcommittee almost since its inception, and was one of the most thorough and reliable editors and proofreaders of agency publications reviewed by the Subcommittee. Jim also played a key role in developing the groundwater sand tank model that is now mass produced by UW Stevens Point students and in over 125 schools around the state through the annual teacher workshops coordinated by WGNHS, the Groundwater Center, and WDNR. Jim was also a great spokesperson for UW Extension on groundwater topics in numerous public forums, workshops, meetings, etc. Fran Garb agreed to work on getting a new UW System representative for the Education Subcommittee.

5. **FY06 Solicitation for Groundwater Proposals** - Jim Hurley summarized the FY06 solicitation process, which closed on November 15, 2004. 29 projects were submitted, 28 of which were eligible for UW System funding. A total of \$740,703 was requested for first year funding (with fringe benefits excluded), ranging between \$12,000 and \$47,000 per project. Each proposal was sent out to at least three different external peer reviewers, as well as the Research Subcommittee and Monitoring Work Group of the GCC. The GCC groups scored each proposal separately for UW System and DNR funding. The Groundwater Research Advisory Council (GRAC) received a final list of projects ranked by an overall score consisting of 75% external review average scores and 25% GCC average score, along with a synopsis of reviewer comments. The GRAC met on Friday, February 18 to discuss the proposals and make a recommendation for UW System Groundwater Research Plan.
6. **Approval of UW System Groundwater Research Plan** - Jim provided a handout detailing the proposed UW System Groundwater Research Plan for FY06. He noted that 4 projects were continuing from FY05. Two of these projects were shifted to USGS matching funds as approved by the GCC at the November meeting, leaving approximately \$197,500 available for new projects after removing administrative costs and a \$20,000 UW System budget cut. The GRAC selected 8 projects for funding based upon this expected funding level, the external and GCC subcommittee reviews, and the GRAC's assessment of the intent of UW System groundwater research funds. The GRAC authorized Jim to work with Randy Hunt, the Chair of the GRAC to trim \$6000 from the budgets of these 8 projects to match the available funding level. Cuts were applied to faculty salaries, supplies, or travel in order to maintain graduate student funding. Jim asked for the GCC's consent to move forward with the research plan and endorse the solicitation and review process for FY 06. *Fran Garb moved the acceptance of these recommendations and affirmed that they are consistent with the purpose of the funds. Henry Anderson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.*
7. **Discussion of proposal solicitation and review process** - Randy Hunt, chair of the GRAC, brought up two issues for the GCC to consider based upon the recent GRAC deliberations. Because of the increasingly tight funding situation and large number of high quality proposals, the GRAC experienced difficulties in making the final decision about which projects to fund. One of the biggest issues was determining whether proposals met the definition of "groundwater research" in the context of the solicitation criteria and priorities. The other was the potential for conflict of interest among GRAC members who also had proposals submitted for consideration. The current practice is for PI's to excuse themselves from the room when their proposal is being discussed. Randy asked the GCC to provide feedback on these two topics, as well as a process for addressing these issues.

The GCC discussed these issues at length. In terms of the definition issue, there was general consensus that it would be difficult and limiting to try to define what constitutes groundwater research

in the solicitation. Instead, the GRAC should be clearer about its research priorities. One option would be to target certain priorities that rotate from year to year. Also, the GCC could play a more active role in shaping UW's research priorities to reflect agency needs, as it has traditionally done for the DNR. On the conflict of interest issue, the GCC acknowledged the need for people with expertise to sit on the GRAC, and that it would be difficult to exclude active researchers. However, there were strong sentiments that PI's with submitted proposals for a given year should not participate in the final decision-making (i.e. the GRAC meeting).

Randy will ask for additional feedback at the May GCC meeting to bring to the GRAC for a summer meeting. Also, Tim noted that the GCC Research Subcommittee would be meeting to evaluate priorities this spring or summer with possible recommendations for the GCC and GRAC to consider.

8. **Straddling the Divide: Water Supply Planning in the Lake Michigan Region** - Chuck Dunning provided an update on this conference which brought together technical and policy/planning experts from the three states bordering southern Lake Michigan to deal with groundwater pumping and supply issues in NE Illinois and SE Wisconsin. Seven people from Wisconsin were on the planning board (out of 16) and 5 presented talks. Plenary topics included a "symphonic approach to water management," case studies on the Edwards Aquifer and Atlanta area, water and cities, and regional supply issues. The key success of the meeting was to have regional planning commission folks talking to technical experts. Jim Hurley noted that lots of the technical talks were based on Joint Solicitation funded research in Wisconsin. More information can be found at <http://www.nipc.org/environment/slmrwc/conferences/>.
9. **USGS Great Lakes Water Availability Pilot Study** - Randy Hunt reported that the USGS has received funding for a new study of water availability in the Great Lakes Basin. Randy and Daniel Feinstein of the Wisconsin District will be involved in groundwater recharge and modeling aspects. Randy noted that though funding came up fairly quickly, it will be helpful to leverage funds from States. The USGS wants State input and involvement, even though there may not have been a lot of input up front. This will be a 5-year project and will be up and running in the next few weeks. More details at <http://www.usgs.gov/budget/2006/wateravail021405.pdf>
10. **Diamino-atrazine ELISA evaluation** - Bruce Rheineck reported on a continuing interagency effort to improve upon a low-cost screening test for detecting atrazine in well water. The current "triazine screen" does not pick up all of the metabolites that make up Wisconsin's health standard. With DNR funding, the State Lab of Hygiene evaluated a new test kit designed to detect diamino-atrazine metabolite with well water samples collected by DATCP. The initial results seemed promising, with both better accuracy and fewer false negatives by using both tests simultaneously. Another benefit would be to help DATCP focus GC efforts where needed most. However, the cost of the screening test would almost double (from \$25 to \$45). DATCP, DNR, the State Lab, and the UW Stevens Point water testing lab are gathering more data to establish guidelines for using both tests, as well as to decide whether the increased cost would be a barrier to people choosing to sample their water.
11. **DNR Water Monitoring Strategy** - Todd Ambs reported that the DNR had recently compiled a statewide water monitoring strategy, which lays out a framework for all types of water monitoring that occur in the state – groundwater and surface water - and includes all agencies and groups that collect water information. One of the challenges is to integrate targeted monitoring for regulatory purposes with baseline monitoring for fisheries and habitat assessment. The groundwater piece was in some ways the hardest to integrate because of lack of funds, but also the easiest because of past GCC and interagency efforts. Todd noted that citizen-based monitoring was a key feature of the strategy and that funding was being targeted to boost these efforts. The DNR has posted the strategy on the following website: http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/MonitoringStrategy_13_V1WEB_2-4-05.pdf

12. **Monitoring and Predictive Modeling of Subdivision Impacts on Groundwater** - Jeff Wilcox, a graduate student in the UW-Madison Department of Geology and Geophysics, presented an overview of this Joint Solicitation funded project which is part of a 10-year groundwater monitoring effort involving a new unsewered subdivision in Dane County. The impetus behind the study is to assess impacts to groundwater of homes using private wells and "alternative" onsite wastewater treatment at the subdivision scale. Initial results have shown that nitrate and chloride levels are fairly elevated in background samples and are highly variable – both spatial and temporally. Thus it may be difficult to use these constituents as tracers or indicators of septic input. The focus of the project currently is on developing methods and screening tools for detecting "emerging contaminants" – PCPs, antibiotics, pharmaceuticals - that may be unique to human sources. Some of the questions the study will address: Are these emerging contaminants a concern from septic systems? Do they reach the water table or are they treated? What is the impact to surface water through groundwater flow system? The sampling effort includes septic effluent, monitoring wells & lysimeters near systems, and modeling of transport processes. More details (maps, photos, results) can be found on a web page devoted to the project: <http://www.geology.wisc.edu/~hydro/SV/Index.htm>.

13. **Agency Updates:**

- **DHFS:** Henry Anderson noted that the budget has caused some reorganization and restructuring of groundwater functions within the agency.
- **DATCP:** Bruce Rheineck called attention to upcoming public hearings on nutrient management standards (ATCP 50), and livestock facility siting (ATCP 51), noting that the new rules will include phosphorus as well as nitrate.
- **Commerce:** Eric Scott reported that the agency had received 70+ pages of public comment on revisions to PECFA reimbursement rules (Comm 47), and that revisions to the storage tank rule (Comm 10) were also in progress.
- **WRI:** Anders Andren is heading back to Washington to encourage lawmakers to reinstate funding for the national network of Water Resources Centers (WRCs). He is also leading an effort to develop a national plan for the WRCs, which will respond to the National Academy of Sciences report that identified water resources research needs. Jim Hurley noted that the WRI was sponsoring an international conference on mercury in August 2006 and would be publishing a new newsletter called Aquatic Sciences Chronicle jointly with the Sea Grant program.
- **DOT:** Dan Scudder noted that his agency was also in the midst of reorganization and budget talks
- **DNR:** Todd Ambs reported that the Governor's budget included 5 new groundwater positions, and that the agency hoped to increase this to 9. Todd also noted that a revised Annex agreement was close, with one more round of public comment planned. Some of the major sticking points are regional review, complexity, and weak water conservation provisions. He noted that the next iteration will be in final form – either it will go forward as is or will die. Unfortunately the diversion issue is driving it, not consumptive use within the Great Lakes basin.

14. **The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM.** The remaining meetings for 2005 will be as follows:

- May 13, 2005, 12:00 noon - 3:00 PM, at the WGNHS, 3817 Mineral Point Road
- August 12, 2005, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM, at a location TBD (hosted by DNR)
- November 11, 2005, 12:00 noon - 3:00 PM, at WisDOT, 4802 Sheboygan Avenue

Respectfully submitted,

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Department of Natural Resources